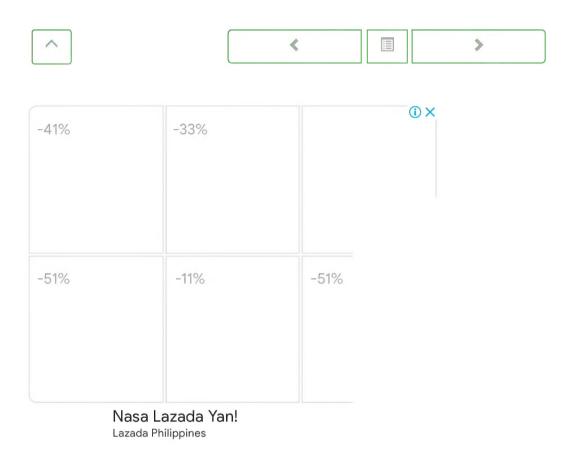
LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C865: Crossing Hands



Chapter 865: Crossing Hands

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The Soulshock Incense was crafted using several hundred unique medicinal herbs, and its effects were so potent that it was effective even on Chrysalis realm cultivators. However, the Soulshock Incense didn't discriminate between friend and foe. Even if they could blow the smoke away from them now, they would still be affected by it once they entered the cavern.

"Every toxin has a counteracting antidote to it. Most likely, they must have concocted a pairing antidote and consumed it beforehand," Zhang Xuan replied calmly.

There was always an antidote to a poison, no matter how potent it was, needless to say a substance that only induced hallucinations.

"Un!" The others nodded in agreement.

"What should we do then? Once the smoke fills the cavern, the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers will surely be knocked out, and they will be free to obtain the fruits!" Dong Xin exclaimed anxiously.

The other party had a Half-Saint expert, so it would be impossible for them to get to the Scarlet Firefly Fruits faster than the other party once the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers were knocked out.

After a moment of deep thought, Zhang Xuan replied, "We will have to be the first to strike then..."

Since they were unable to outrun or outfight the other party, they would just have to be the first one to make a move!

"Be the first to strike?" The others were perplexed, unsure of what Zhang Xuan meant.

The other party was right in front of the cavern, and the cavern was currently filled with the smoke of the Soulshock Incense as well. Even if they were to rush in now, not only would they be unable to obtain the Scarlet Firefly Fruits, they might even succumb to hallucinations as well, putting them in a vulnerable position.

"Wait for me here. If anything happens, leave the area immediately. Remember, your safety comes first. I will circle the area to see if I can find an opportunity to sneak into the cavern without them noticing," Zhang Xuan instructed.

"You want to sneak into the cavern?"

The cavern was only that big, and the duo was right before the cavern. How could he possibly sneak in without the other party noticing?

"Don't worry about that, leave it to me..." Zhang Xuan reassured them before diving to the side.

In a few moments, he had already disappeared from their sights.

"This..." After Zhang Xuan's departure, Dong Xin and the others glanced at one another with bewilderment reflected in their eyes, unsure of what to do.

A long moment later, Hu Yaoyao sighed deeply and said, "Let's just follow Zhang shi's instructions. Since he has already said those words, he must have an idea in mind..."

In the current circumstances, there was nothing they could do. Their only option was to follow Zhang Xuan's commands.

Considering the various miracles that the latter had produced before, perhaps he might just be able to exceed their expectations once more and obtain the Scarlet Firefly Fruits ahead of the duo.



After getting out of the others' sight, Zhang Xuan hid in a discreet location before drawing his soul out.

Under the present circumstances, the only way for him to sneak into the cavern discreetly was through his soul.

As for what he said about circling the area and finding an opportunity, that was only an excuse for him to hide out of view.

Floating in the air, Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before whipping out a bottle of Origin Heavy Water. He fed it to his body and drew out several surges of Heaven's Path zhenqi from his dantian before stowing his body into the Myriad Anthive Nest.

His physical body had already achieved the Mind of Void, allowing it to cultivate instinctively without his soul. Since that was the case, it would be a waste not to make full use of the ability to cultivate the Third Incandescence, especially since it wouldn't interfere in his mission anyway.

Hu!

Holding his storage ring up with his soul energy, Zhang Xuan's soul traveled silently alongside the cliff face toward the cavern.

There were many trees and shrubs growing alongside the cliff face, all the way to the cavern, so it wasn't too difficult for Zhang Xuan to move his small storage ring discreetly among them.

On top of that, Zhang Xuan's soul had reached Ethereal Treading realm pinnacle, granting him greater control over his soul energy. If he were to conceal his aura, there was no way a Half-Saint would be able to notice him.

Hu!

By making use of a temporary lapse in attention of the duo, Zhang Xuan managed to dart into the cavern with his storage ring without alarming anyone.

Heaving a sigh of relief, he began to scan his surroundings.

The interior of the cavern was spacious and deep. From where he stood, he couldn't see the other end.

At this moment, there was already a light layer of smoke drifting in the cavern, and with just the slightest inhalation, one would fall into a deep trance.

If it had been before, even if Zhang Xuan had cultivated the Heaven's Path Soul Art, he would still have needed to proceed warily around such poison. However, after his soul had mixed with Wei Ruyan's and gained the properties of the Poison Soul Constitution, such poison no longer posed a threat to him.

Advancing deeper into the cavern, Zhang Xuan soon encountered a bizarre-looking tree.

It had a twisted tree trunk with a thickness roughly equivalent to an average bowl with vine-like branches stretching from it. Hanging on those vine-like branches were golden leaves and several light-red fruits.

It seems the fruits haven't matured yet... Upon taking a look, Zhang Xuan could tell that the fruits were still several days away from maturity.

The distinctive trait of a mature Scarlet Firefly Fruit was its bright scarlet color and the emanation of a glow reminiscent of a firefly. However, it was currently only light-red in color.

Just as Dong Xin and the others had deduced, it would still take from a week to half a month before they were ready to be harvested.

Standing on guard right before the tree was a massive Sabertooth Spirit Tiger. It had an impressive body, which was two meters tall and five meters long, and it carried an oppressive aura that seemed to stifle one's breath.

The other Sabertooth Spirit Tiger was prowling warily around the tree with its gaze frequently turning to the entrance of the cavern. It seemed to have realized that there were enemies camping outside, and nervousness and apprehension were reflected in its eyes. It seemed to be debating whether or not it should simply devour the unripe Scarlet Firefly Fruits and escape swiftly.

The smoke of the Soulshock Incense had yet to reach this part of the cavern, so the two large tigers still retained their consciousness.

It seems Dong Xin's intelligence is spot on... Zhang Xuan nodded in approval.

There were indeed ten fruits on the tree, and the two Sabertooth Spirit Tigers were at Chrysalis realm pinnacle as well.

To be able to gather such detailed intelligence, Dong Xin must have scouted the cavern as well.

While the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers were extremely wary, it was inevitable that they would lower their guards from time to time, especially while they were tending to their fundamental needs. Furthermore, the fruits were still far from maturity then, so they wouldn't have been as wary as they were now.

With Dong Xin's Chrysalis realm pinnacle cultivation, even if she wasn't a match for the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers, she was still capable of sneaking in discreetly to scout the area.

There are two ways I can proceed now. First, I can release the Byzantium Helios Beast, kill these two spirit beasts, and claim possession of the Scarlet Firefly Fruits. This is the easiest and most direct method, but I will risk exposing my means as a soul oracle and the existence of the Myriad Anthive Nest. Second, I can find a way to hasten the maturity of the Scarlet Firefly Fruits, harvest them, and swiftly escape without anyone noticing. If so, I can avoid a confrontation with the two master teachers, thus sparing me a great deal of trouble... Zhang Xuan thought.

Naturally, the easiest solution would be to release the Byzantium Helios Beast and swiftly get rid of the two tigers. However, it would be hard to explain how he had managed to sneak into the cavern without their notice and where the Byzantium Helios Beast had come from.

The second method it is then! After giving the matter some thought, Zhang Xuan still felt that the second method would be safer.

I will have to knock these two fellows out first...

Having made up his mind, Zhang Xuan's soul retreated slightly behind and drew the smoke of the Soulshock Incense in with his soul energy.

The Scarlet Firefly Fruit should only be harvested upon maturity, and in order to hasten the maturity of the Scarlet Firefly Fruit, Zhang Xuan would have to bring out his physical body to utilize his Heaven's Path zhenqi. Thus, he would have to incapacitate the two Sabertooth Spirit Tigers first.

Under the control of his soul, the smoke of the Soulshock Incense swiftly gathered around the tree. Too focused on the cultivators loitering outside the cavern, the two spirit beasts didn't expect to be poisoned. Unknowingly, they took a few breaths in, and their bodies began shaking uncontrollably. In the blink of an eye, they were already hallucinating.

After waiting for a few moments to confirm that the two fellows were incapacitated, Zhang Xuan rushed forward to the tree, took out his physical body, and returned his soul to it.

Flicking his wrist, he took out a gourd of Earth Vein Spirit Essence and dripped it on the fruits while pumping his Heaven's Path zhenqi into them.

The reason Zhang Xuan dared to go in there without having to worry about being late for the inauguration ceremony, despite Hu Yaoyao saying that she was unsure when the Scarlet Firefly Fruit would mature, was due to this ability of his.

He had learned of this method when he had tried to hasten the maturity of the Ten-leafed Flower back in You Xu's residence previously. Under the influx of the Earth Vein Spirit Essence and Heaven's Path zhenqi, the light-red fruits swiftly deepened in color, and a

glow gradually emerged within them. Before long, a refreshing fragrance began to permeate the surroundings.

The fruits have matured! Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

He swiftly harvested the ten Scarlet Firefly Fruits and placed them in a jade box before stowing them into his storage ring. After which, he drew his soul out of his body and placed his body into the Myriad Anthive Nest before storing the nest in his storage ring as well.

After all that was done, he took a glance at the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers once more and saw that they were still shaking on their feet, plagued by hallucinations. Heaving a sigh of relief, he swiftly picked up his ring and rushed out of the cavern.

Shortly after he escaped from the cavern, he saw the two master teachers who had lit the Soulshock Incense earlier walking over, seemingly trying to check if they had successfully knocked out the Sabertooth Spirit Tigers.

With a slight smile, Zhang Xuan quickly left the premises with his storage ring. He hurriedly searched for a discreet area with no one around before letting his body out and returning to it.

In the time he had spent stealing the Scarlet Firefly Fruits, his physical body had successfully cultivated the Third Incandescence of the Quintuple Incandescence Golden Body.

His physical strength had doubled, rising from the original 8,000,000 ding to 16,000,000 ding.

If exerted in unison with his soul and zhenqi cultivation, he would be able to bring out a combined might of 53,000,000 ding, which was comparable to the strength of a Half-Saint pinnacle cultivator!

(Half-Saint primary stage 40,000,000 ding; intermediate stage 44,000,000 ding; advanced stage 48,000,000 ding; pinnacle 52,000,000 ding)

Feeling the overwhelming power coursing through his body, Zhang Xuan couldn't help but tremble with excitement.
For an Ethereal Treading realm primary stage cultivator to possess strength on par with a Half-Saint pinnacle cultivator, that would terrify the bejesus out of others!
That was a gap that couldn't be justified by just talent; it could only be said to be a miracle!
Alright, I should return now Exhaling deeply, Zhang Xuan stood up and returned to the area where he had last seen Hu Yaoyao and the others.
However, just as he was approaching the area, he suddenly felt a violent shockwave rippling in the surroundings.
This is bad
Narrowing his eyes in alarm, Zhang Xuan picked up his pace and rushed over. A few breaths later, he saw several cultivators battling one another intensely in a clearing.

Xue Zhenyang, Hu Yaoyao, Dong Xin, and Long Cangyue were fighting one of the duo they had encountered earlier. They executed powerful attacks with varying styles, but their opponent, despite fighting the four of them simultaneously, didn't seem to be falling in defeat. On the contrary, he easily neutralized their attacks and even cornered the four of them to the point that they had to execute their strongest techniques just to hold their ground.

It's the Chrysalis realm pinnacle fellow? Zhang Xuan took a look at their opponent and frowned.

If their opponent had been the Half-Saint expert, it would be understandable for the four of them to still be in a disadvantageous position despite putting their strength together. However, their opponent was the Chrysalis realm pinnacle master teacher, possessing cultivation equal to theirs!

The four of them were famed geniuses of the Master Teacher Academy, and there were barely any cultivators of the same cultivation realm who could defeat them.

Yet, for them to be cornered even in a four-on-one battle against a fellow peer, was this really happening?

Their opponent was a little... way too powerful!

Glancing to the side, Zhang Xuan saw the Half-Saint cultivator leaning a boulder as he gazed at the duel impassively, seemingly unworried that his companion would lose at all.

It seemed that the other party had absolute confidence in the strength of his companion.

Knowing that Hu Yaoyao and the others would lose tragically should the duel continue as it was, Zhang Xuan stood forward and bellowed, "Stop!"

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